



DWIGHT INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL
Marble City, Oklahoma

American Indian Institute, gives promise of becoming a fine Christian leader among his people.

An older pupil, a boy of part Creek and part Cherokee blood, had attended the mission school several years. He was slightly involved in a matter of thieving from the school fruit-room. In discussing it he said, "I don't tell lies like I used to—before I came here. I'm a whole lot 'proved. Another boy's father made whiskey in the woods. We used to carry food to the still. And I used to go with another boy with two sacks on our ponies and we would go out and fill them with watermelons. Now I'm a whole lot 'proved." Improved he was.

One is moved by mingled joy, caution, and humility regarding his own rôle when he considers such a naive request as came from a Cherokee girl. "I want to ask you if I can become a Christian." Again, a small full-blood Kickapoo, who chummed with a Choctaw boy, asked his dormitory supervisor, "May Joseph and I accept Christ?"

Dwight is eager that its graduates be so prepared that they may go on with their high school education, and over eighty per cent of them do. But even more important is the preparation of the students for living useful, exemplary Christian lives among their own people, so that the influence of their religious training may reach out to many. This is the mission's goal.

Support of missionary, including maintenance and travel, \$1,200.

Scholarship, \$100. Shares in station support, \$10 up.

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"Righteous Men of Old"

In 1818 two missionaries from the East, under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, fought their way west into the lowlands of Northern Arkansas, and, near the present location of Russellville, selected the site for the first Dwight Mission. School was opened January 1, 1822, with two Cherokee children enrolled. In 1829, by reason of "An Act to Remove the Cherokee Indians and Dwight Mission" which was passed by Congress, Dwight was reestablished near what is now Marble City, Oklahoma. The school, long known as "The Glory of the Cherokees," grew in size and influence for many years. The dangers and difficulties occasioned by the outbreak of the Civil War made it necessary to close the Mission in 1860. Roving bands of soldiers pillaged and burned the buildings and property. About 1884 the school was reopened and rebuilt, and has continued in almost unbroken service since that time. It now stands on the same spot where it has been for 108 years and holds the distinction of being the oldest school in Oklahoma now extant.

"As Sheep Having No Shepherd"

The present location of Dwight among the low-lying, densely wooded hills of Eastern Oklahoma provides beautiful natural surroundings that vary with each season of the year. The country of the Cherokees lies to the north, and that of the Choctaws to the south. But few of the students come from the immediate neighborhood, so opportunities for community work in their homes and among their peoples are very limited. However, on many occasions the school can render service to the residents of the Dwight community. The Mission cemetery,

which adjoins the campus, is frequently the scene of a funeral, and the school is often called upon to furnish shovels and picks for digging the grave, lumber and the facilities of the manual arts shop for constructing the coffin, the use of the truck to bring the body of the deceased to the burial ground and, often with no warning, singers and a speaker to conduct the service.

All religious meetings held at Dwight are open to the people of the community, and vacation Bible school has been held for the neighbor children.

"The Promise Is to All That Are Afar Off"

The student body consists usually of about fifty-five girls and a like number of boys, all with a large percentage of Indian blood. They range in age from eight to eighteen. The pupils live at distances varying from two or three miles to two hundred miles from the school. Thirteen tribes are represented this year, the Cherokees being in the majority. There are also a number of Kickapoos, Choctaws, Creeks, and Shawnees.

Most of the pupils come from primitive and isolated rural homes, crude log or frame cabins almost entirely without the furnishings which are usually considered "necessities."

"Day Unto Day; Night Unto Night"

It is small wonder that, with such background, new children are always surprised and even fascinated by the bright, roomy dormitories, with their clean linen, electric lights, and running water, and with the other well-appointed buildings in which they study and work. However, no little patience is required to accustom them to the newness of boarding school life.

Before the six o'clock rising bell rings, several of the older students are already up, building fires, starting the engines, and working in the barn. At six, the rest of the children rise; the hour before breakfast is spent in tidying rooms and in doing various tasks about the dormitory and kitchen.

After breakfast, classes begin for three of the five groups into which the children are divided. At three of the periods of the school day, three groups are in the classrooms while the remaining two are busy at their various tasks—in the kitchen, in the laundry, in the dormitories, or out on the campus. The last period of the day finds the entire school in session.

Each pupil works some time during the day, the amount varying from one to three hours, depending on his age and physical ability. There is a great variety of tasks to be done, and effort is made so to assign the pupil that he will have experience in the types of work which will be of most value to him in later life.

Dwight endeavors to give proper emphasis to the physical development of its students. In the late afternoon, organized, well supervised recreation is provided for all the pupils. Basketball, softball, tennis, and track are the major sports included in the program. The Dwight basketball teams have been for many years particularly successful; a sizable collection of trophies attests to the athletic prowess of the Indian players.

In the evening, after a short study hall period and group devotion, "lights out" is sounded, and the day is over.

"Grew in Wisdom"

The curriculum at Dwight includes the academic subjects usually offered in grades three to eight, but an attempt is made to modify the courses to fit the

special needs of Indian children. A pre-vocational program is offered, and the class instruction is correlated with the tasks to which the students are assigned in their work periods. Despite the fact that the children come in the main from homes where an eighth grade education is considered the height of educational attainment, an increasing number go on to high school each year.

"While He May Be Found"

Throughout the time the Indian students are at Dwight, the religious influence exerted on them is of paramount importance. Every day chapel services are conducted, Bible study is pursued in each grade, and devotional services are held before breakfast and at bedtime in small groups in the dormitories. Church services for all in the campus church and Sunday school, and Christian Endeavor meetings for the different age groups complete the weekly religious program. In addition, each year a guest speaker brings a series of very forceful evangelistic services. In 1936, as a result of these services, thirty-one boys and girls joined the church on Easter Sunday.

At the close of the last Christian Endeavor meeting of the school year, an eighth grade boy, the only one in the graduating class who had not made a decision for Christ, arose and faced the group. He said, "Though I have been here at Dwight a whole year and have had chances to accept Christ, I have put it off; but I want to take Him now." So deep and sincere were his convictions that his voice faltered a bit as he concluded. But the tone of the decision was clear-cut, and the other boys and girls were touched to an extent to which they are seldom moved. This boy has much ability and, with the further education which he is now receiving at the